

March 5, 2015

To Representative Tercyak, Senator Gomes and the members of the Labor Committee,

I support raising the tip credit wage because doing so will improve the quality of employees who are servers and prevent it from becoming unpleasant to dine out.

Right now I work as a manager of the Milford location of a chain of tanning salons. Prior to my current position, I worked as a server at Nello's, a now-closed restaurant that was also in my hometown of Milford, Connecticut.

While working at Nello's, I was often assigned to the take out service of the restaurant. I worked for the same sub-minimum wage as the tipped servers but never received tips because I was not waiting tables. I was actually doing more work than the servers because I had to pack up the meals once the cooks finished preparing them, pack them appropriately for transit and then load the meals into the customer's car. But because the car wasn't a table, I didn't get tips. Many prominent political figures never tipped me when they picked up hundreds of dollars' worth of take-out meals for meetings and parties. It wasn't a reflection of my work; from my experience at Nello's I learned that people from all walks of life do not know that they should tip a take-out employee.

But the fact that the customer either does not know to leave a gratuity does not pay my bills. From talking to servers who fill the same position, I know that servers assigned to the take-out window will make less than \$200.00 per week if they work full-time simply because no one tips the take-out window.

I could barely survive on what I was earning at Nello's. I stayed and worked as hard as I did only because I had respect for the owner. When the business closed from lack of patronage so I lost my job anyway. But I was barely surviving. I cannot imagine what other take-out workers like me do to survive now. I do not believe that they will be able to survive if the tip credit wage does not increase nominally.

I feel like it is my duty to warn members of Connecticut's General Assembly: if this law does not pass, the quality of servers and employees in restaurants where you eat will decline so much that you will no longer eat out. Every decent server will do what I did and find another line of work.

**Please support SB 858 as a bill to eliminate the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers.**

Amber Gates